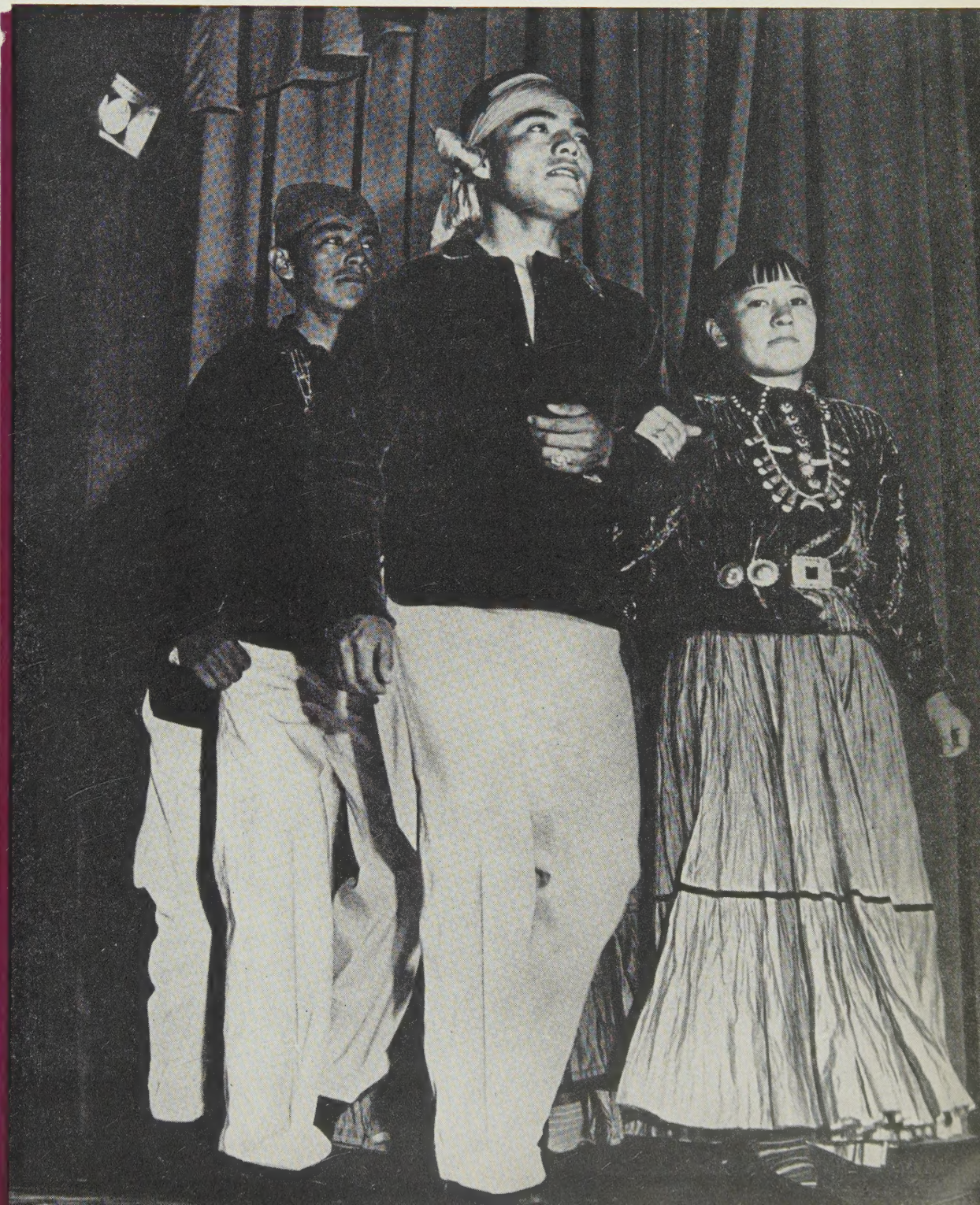


THE NEGRO HISTORY BULLETIN

APRIL
1942



THE NEGRO HISTORY BULLETIN

APRIL, 1942

Volume V

Number 7

Published by

The Association for the Study of
Negro Life and History
1538 Ninth Street, N. W.,
Washington, D. C.

PURPOSE: *To inculcate an appreciation of the past of the Negro.*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Albert N. D. Brooks
Lois M. Jones
Florence R. Beatty-Brown
Carol W. Hayes
Esther Popel Shaw
Wilhelmina M. Crosson
Carter G. Woodson
Managing Editor

The subscription fee of this paper is \$1.00 a year, or 12 cents a copy; but, if taken in combinations of five or more copies and mailed to one person and in one package it may be obtained at the rate of 5 bulk subscriptions for \$2.70; 10 for \$5.40; 20 for \$10.80, and so on. Published monthly except July, August and September, 1538 Ninth St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Entered as second class matter October 31, 1937, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

CONTENTS

ESTEVANICO, THE NEGRO EXPLORER

*By Annie E. Duncan*THE NEGRO FIRST TO PRODUCE WHEAT
IN AMERICA

THE NEGRO IN THE SOUTHWEST

NEGRO ABRAHAM

THE LAND OF VISIONS UNLIMITED

NEGRO HISTORY IN NEW YORK CITY

By Alice Citron

THE SATURDAY MORNING ART CLASS

By Lois M. Jones

AMERICAN NEGRO SOLDIER

*By Dr. De Haven Hinkson*THE NEGRO TEACHER IN NATIONAL
DEFENSE*By Rhoza A. Walker*

VICTOR SÉJOUR AND HIS TIMES

*By A. E. Perkins*APRIL, THE SEASON FOR CELEBRATING
FREEDOM

QUESTIONS ON THE MARCH ISSUE

A RECENT BOOK

BOOK OF THE MONTH

ESTEVANICO, THE NEGRO EXPLORER

“WATER! Water! I am so thirsty.”

The three men sitting by the feverish man merely looked at each other. Again the tortured man cried out as he tried in vain to raise himself:

“Look! here comes Narvaez and his men. See? My brother Hernando is with them carrying the flag of Spain.”

The men shook their heads. How they wished that Narvaez and his men were really there as they were the year before. But now, after frequent attacks by the Indians as well as suffering and hardships of all kinds, their comrades were all dead. Only the four of them were left, and one of them might soon be gone. What a pitiful remnant of the gallant band of five hundred who had set out from Spain in 1527.

Finally Pedro spoke. “Let us leave Juan. He is out of his head, and will not live through the night.”

Manual joined in, “Yes, the Indians will hear him raving and may kill us all.”

“Would you leave our friend to die alone in this wild place?” cried Estevanico. “Besides, he might not die. By morning the medicine we have given him may make him better. Go if you will, but I will stay to care for him.”

The two Spaniards sat in shamed silence, knowing that Estevanico was right.

The next day Juan was better, and at the end of the second day they moved slowly on, carrying the sick man. This they did until he was strong again, and at last they came to the coast of Texas.

For six years the explorers wandered about among the Indians, learning their languages and customs. Finally they were enslaved in an Indian village, and were given hard, dangerous tasks to do.

One evening the men of the tribe sorrowfully returned to the village from a hunting trip bearing their chief's son who had become ill.

“Call the medicine man,” said the chief. “He will drive away the evil spirits that torture him.”

For three days there was a hush in the village while the medicine man used all his knowledge in trying to cure the youth, but he grew thinner and his eyes became brighter with fever. The sad old chief sat with heavy heart watching the restless boy. Slowly someone approached him. It was Estevanico. He waited for the chief to look up, but he did not take his eyes from his son.

“We have seen many men like this, Chief, but all of them did not die,” said Estevanico after some minutes. Will you let us make medicine for him?”

(Continued on page 150)

THE NEGRO FIRST TO PRODUCE WHEAT IN AMERICA

SOME men spend years in quest of valuable trinkets. With these to sell to the leaders of fashion such traders may grow rich. The Spanish explorers accidentally came upon the new world in seeking a short route to the Indies to secure from the Far East trinkets and spices with the hope to enrich themselves by disposing of these valuables to the wealthy classes of Europe. When these adventurers finally reached America they heard of lands of precious metals and valuable pearls. They then set out upon further exploration to make themselves richer in a quicker way. If they could tap the sources of silver and gold, if they could find the wealthy Indian cities decorated with topaz and turquoise, they would be rich at once. Thus went Hernando Cortes into Mexico, and when he did not find what he wanted he pushed on to the next place with the assistance of his lieutenants, Orozco, Alvarado, Olid, Sandoval, Chico, Avalos, and Montejo.

Among the followers of Cortes was another subordinate who was not so much concerned with Cortes' conquest of the Aztecs in Mexico or with the strife and rivalry among the Spanish leaders themselves. This other subordinate was a Negro. His mind ran toward practical things. In many of the expeditions and wars in that part the matter of food was often a problem. In that country grew maize, or Indian corn; and it became popular among the first European settlers in America because the soil and climate were better suited to maize than any other cereal. Maize was much easier to plant, to cultivate, to harvest, to grind, and to cook. At first the European adventurers relied mainly on rice.

This Negro, while ever facing the problem of food to be preserved and carried with men on the march, thought of an experiment. One day when given his allowance of rice, he found therein some colored grains which immensely interested him. He planted these seeds, cultivated the plants which sprang therefrom, watched them as they flowered, and rejoiced when he saw the blossoms pass away and signs of growing grain appear. At harvest

time others could rejoice with him, for he had discovered something more valuable than gold. He had proved that wheat could be produced in the new world. When the settlers finally saw that most of the fabulous riches sought for in America were like those at the end of the rainbow, they began to cultivate the soil. Wheat raising became common, and now that grain is the great product of America.

Wheat had long been cultivated in the old world. Its origin, however, is obscure. It is believed that it developed from a wild grass found in the hilly districts of southeastern Europe and Asia Minor. The plant has been improved by selection and crossing. Today wheat is a very different plant from what it was centuries ago. Various species now abound, namely, einkorn, emmer, macaroni wheat, Egyptian cone wheat, Polish wheat, Khorasan, and bread wheat, the most important of all. Bread wheat varies as Indian dwarf wheat, club wheat and dinkel, or spelt. The civilized world looks upon wheat as the most important of all cereals.

While wheat cannot be produced, harvested, and ground as easily as maize, it can be used for so many more purposes than maize and can be more easily preserved and transplanted. It was a lucky stroke, then, that this Negro so early demonstrated that wheat could be planted in America and thus turned the minds of goldseekers and adventurers toward the practical pursuits of life. The early settlers then saw how they could give up their search for sudden riches with which they might return to Europe for a life of luxury. In America they could make a living and build new homes.

The first wheat area in what is now the United States was the district from Delaware and Maryland to New York. Next developed a more productive area north of the Ohio River. Finally after the Civil War when there was a rush to the West the rich lands of the prairies became the wheat country; and today most of this grain grown in the United States is produced west of the Mississippi.

(Continued on page 150)

THE NEGRO IN THE SOUTHWEST

The Negro in the Southwestern part of the United States is a chapter of contacts with the Spaniards and Indians. We know that Negroes were with Columbus and accompanied practically all the Spanish explorers. Negroes went with Ayllon in 1526 as far north as San Miguel, the present site of Jamestown in Virginia; with Ponce de Leon in Florida; and with De Soto on the Mississippi. The most romantic part of this history of the Negroes of this group, however, is the account of their crossing the Isthmus with Balboa to discover the Pacific, with Cortes to conquer Mexico and with Alarcon and Coronado to explore the present area of Arizona and New Mexico.

The picture is not clear without keeping in mind that the Spaniards not only wanted to claim the country for their European sovereign under whom New Spain might be established in America but the individuals participating in the exploration hoped to find centers of fabulous wealth derived from an abundance of precious stones and metals. Certain Indians, the aborigines, they believed, had already exploited these resources and, therefore, could recline in luxury and ease in centers which rivaled the wealth and splendor of Europe. Cortes had failed to realize such a dream in his conquest of Mexico, but the end of the search was not yet.

Fortunately when the Spaniards decided to make the dash toward the north from their Mexican base they made the acquaintance of a most remarkable Negro, Estevanico, or Little Stephen, sometimes referred to also as Stephen Dorantes. This adventurer had survived the ill-fated Spanish expedition of Narvaez which was lost in the efforts to subdue the country between Florida and Mexico. Little Stephen had wandered around among the Indians for seven years in the wilderness where he posed as a doctor able to effect wonderful cures. Having learned both the

customs and languages of the aborigines, he was the very man who the Spaniards believed should take charge of the expedition successfully.

Little Stephen was asked in 1539 to lead the way into the interior in quest of the "Seven Cities." It was rumored that the Indians lived there in riches and extravagance. If the news proved favorable as he proceeded toward the place he would send back an Indian with a large cross; if unfavorable with a small cross. Shortly a messenger returned to the base with a cross as tall as a man. The Spaniards girded themselves to advance to this vantage point; but, before they could arrive, Stephen, in trying to take possession without adequate force, had been overcome and killed. The Spaniards followed later in sufficient numbers, however, to claim the country, but the fabulous riches were never found.

The Negroes with the Spaniards proved to be an enduring factor, although in small numbers. There were not many settlers of any description in those parts, for the Spaniards, like the French, scattered over large areas, establishing trading posts and burying plates of possession in the name of their sovereign, but they never sent a sufficient number of settlers to build up the country solidly and thus be able to withstand the attacks of other European adventurers who later disputed their claims. Yet wherever the Spaniards went they had a considerable number of Negroes with them—Negroes taken from communities where they had been long settled in Spain or from settlements of West Africa which during those years maintained close connection with Spain and was controlled in part by that country.

Why the Negroes played such a prominent part among the Spaniards may be explained by their attitudes. The Spaniards, like most Latin people, do not show much race prejudice. They had slaves, but did not treat them so cruelly

as the English settlers did. The Spaniards, moreover, interbred with Negroes and set their mulatto children free in order that they might live as full-fledged citizens. The British settlers were not so liberal, and tended to keep all Negroes on a level lower than that of the whites.

The French were likewise kindly disposed toward Negroes and showed them the same consideration which the blacks received from the Spaniards. Negroes went with the French from Canada down the Ohio and the Mississippi into Louisiana. These pioneers instructed the Negroes in their religion, gave them the rudiments of education, interbred with black people, as did the Spaniards, and freed their mulatto offspring which, in Louisiana, especially in New Orleans, became that famous class known as the Creoles. Some of this class became slaveholding planters and merchants who rivaled the whites in wealth and aristocratic bearing. Not a few went to France to live.

When the Spaniards and the French gradually faded from the picture, yielding ground to stronger powers coming into possession of Florida, Louisiana and Texas, the Negroes still had other friends beyond the frontier—the Indians. The Indians lost their hunting grounds east of the Mississippi, and on the other side of that stream they were pushed still farther back beyond the frontier. In this process of making early America the Negroes in considerable numbers remained with the Indians even in their last stand in the West.

Why the Negroes should take to the Indians or the Indians to the Negroes requires explanation. In the first place, both were considered as undesirables and were persecuted by the white settlers. The general opinion was that the only good Indian was a dead Indian, and the only good Negro was one who could be made to work. The first European settlers in America en-

(Continued on page 155)

NEGRO ABRAHAM

One of the most picturesque figures in American history was Negro Abraham. He was an illiterate fugitive slave who won freedom by fleeing from Pensacola, Florida, to the Seminoles. Among them he became a great diplomat and leader under their chief known as Micanopy. Among the Seminoles his name was sometimes Yobly, but he was often referred to by such other titles as "Prophet," "principal counselor of his master," "prime minister and privy counsellor," and "high chancellor and keeper of the king's conscience."

How did this former slave thus rise so high from obscurity? In the first place, it was easier for a Negro to win recognition among the Indians than among the white settlers. The Indians had slaves and often took in Negro fugitives as slaves, but slavery among the Red Men meant nothing like hard work or cruelty. At best it was an attachment, the token of which was to present to the master some short service or a small part of what was obtained in hunting and cultivating the soil. Among the Indians it was difficult to distinguish between slaves and free persons; and those in bondage easily became free. By 1826 Negro Abraham had become free among the Seminoles and had attained the position of Micanopy's interpreter.

Doubtless Abraham's personal appearance had much to do with the favorable impression which he made. He was a man of distinctly Negroid features. He stood erect over six feet high, strongly though sparsely built. He had a serious but pleasant and smiling face. Under his high and broad forehead showed penetrating eyes which indicated strong character. His words "flowed like oil." Some who met Abraham left unfavorable impressions of his appearance because he always looked the part of a man who could not be handled in the fashion in which it was customary to treat the Indians. One writer said that he was "a perfect Talleyrand of the Savage Court in Florida."

As the spokesman for the Seminoles Abraham faced a serious task. The United States Government at that time was trying to induce the Seminoles to move to the territory on the other side of the Mississippi into what we now call Oklahoma and Kansas. The Seminoles might have been induced to go, but the Negroes living among them and the Negro maroons settled beyond the frontier opposed this transplantation. In the rounding up of those to be removed the Negroes, both free and slave, in that region would be claimed by slaveholding agents. Only when assured that the Negroes would be allowed to go as free men without interruption would Abraham agree to removal.

Abraham consented to investigate the proposed new home provided for in the Treaty of Payne's Landing in 1832, but opposed removal without assurance of freedom to all. Abraham was wise enough to know that the Seminoles would eventually be forced to the West, but he served effectively as a real diplomat in delaying matters until he secured the desired terms. Both the Seminoles and the Negroes were inalterably opposed to settlement among the Creeks from whom the Seminoles had long since seceded. The Creeks would want to dominate the Seminoles and enslave the Negroes. In this region which Congress set apart as Indian Territory in 1834 lived also other Indians — Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Quapaws; but the Seminoles feared the domination of the Creeks. With assurance against such a thing in the Treaty of Fort Dade in 1837 the Seminoles moved West in 1839 and Abraham went with them. He used his influence to have the Seminoles accept what he knew to be inevitable.

The United States Government, however, did not live up to its agreement. In the first place, the Seminoles were so settled in the West as to be subject to the Creeks. The Creeks enslaved the Negroes and permitted slave agents to claim others as fugitives and take them back to the cotton plantations. The

Seminoles and Negroes thus suffered for twenty years, until 1856, when the Seminoles were recognized as an independent tribe and some of these wrongs were righted. The efforts to adjust matters by agreements in 1845 and 1848 were not successful, and Micanopy, the chief friendly to the Negroes, died the latter year. The troubles of the Negroes on the frontier further increased.



NEGRO ABRAHAM

In such a state of affairs Negro Abraham had very little to do. The chief under whom he had served was followed by Jim Jumper, the tool of the Creeks. Coacoochee, a wise leader, who should have been chosen as Micanopy's successor, decided that the best way out of the difficulty was to transplant to Mexico all Seminoles and Negroes who were dissatisfied with the turn things had taken. They departed September 10, 1850, and crossed Texas into Mexico. There they received a grant of land for protecting the border. Some authorities say that Abraham went to Mexico, where he served and died; and others say that he remained in Indian Territory. Abraham has probably been confused with Gopher John, another Negro leader, who succeeded Abraham as the inter-

preter of Micanopy. There is also the belief that Abraham went to Mexico with Coacoochee and returned to Indian Territory after the death of that chieftain in 1857. The new agreement granting the Seminoles the independence which they had long sought made it convenient for them to return. The Negroes as a majority, however, remained in Mexico until after the Civil War when their freedom was no longer questioned.

Estevanico, the Negro Explorer

(Continued from page 146)

Wearily the old man dragged his eyes away from the boy and looked at the Negro. "You may try," he said slowly.

Estevanico hurried away to tell Manuel, Pedro, and Juan. "This is our chance. If this favorite son gets well, we may be freed."

"May the Holy Virgin protect him," said Juan.

They gathered herbs and made potions for the Indian boy. They took turns watching over him and bathing him in cool water. Patiently they worked, and slowly the boy became quiet and drifted off to sleep. After that he gradually got better, and the happy chief knew that he would get well.

The news of the recovery spread to other villages and many Indians came long distances for the magic cures of the explorers. The four men traveled from tribe to tribe as medicine men, and life became much easier for them.

When they reached Mexico, they had a chance to return to Spain. All of them went except Estevanico.

"I shall stay here and learn more about the languages and customs of the people," he said as he bade them goodbye.

About a year later, a group of Spaniards planned to make an expedition northward. They had heard of the "Seven Cities of Cibola," where they would find vast treasures, enough gold, silver and precious stones to last them forever.

They sent for Estevanico in 1539. Fray Marcos de Niza, their leader, said to him:

"You have traveled among the Indians for many years. You know their languages. Will you guide us through the country northward?"

"Yes, I will do it in the name of Spain."

"Good! Go ahead of us then for fifty or sixty leagues. Send us word if all is well and we shall follow."

And so it was agreed that crosses the size of the palm of the hand would be sent as a sign that all was well. If the news were very good, larger crosses would be sent.

Four days later as the Spaniards were making camp, they saw two Indians coming toward them. One was bearing a cross as tall as he. The explorers were elated.

"Estevanico has sent good news," they cried.

"Great news indeed," said the messenger. "Ahead lie seven large cities with houses of stone and lime. They are not ordinary houses. Many of them are four stories high. You will find the doors trimmed in silver and turquoise."

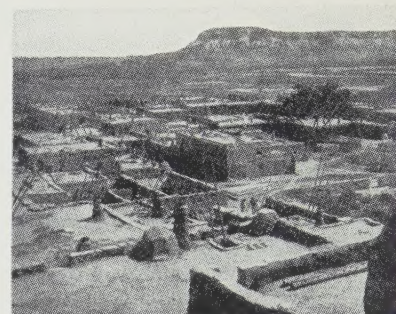
Fray Marcos and his men pressed forward, and on the way, they received other crosses that Estevanico had sent back to them. When they reached the place where Estevanico was supposed to meet them, however, they did not find him. He had gone on to Cibola, the seven cities of the Zuni Indians. There he had been set upon by the natives.

"I have come as a messenger from two white men," Estevanico tried to explain. "One of them is skilled in the things of the heavens."

But not believing that the white men had sent a black man to represent them, the Indians put him to death. When Fray Marcos heard what had happened, he and his men fled back to Mexico.

Not long afterward, other Spaniards came to the cities that Estevanico had explored, and took them in the name of Spain. But the great treasures were only a dream.

ANNIE E. DUNCAN



"ZUNI"
ONE OF THE "SEVEN CITIES"
SOUGHT BY ESTEVANICO

The Negro First to Produce Wheat in America

(Continued from page 147)

The United States leads the world in the production of wheat. During normal times this country produces a little more than 18 million tons of the 105 or 106 million tons grown in the whole world. Next in rank of production appear Russia, Canada, France, India, Italy, Argentina, Spain, Germany, Australia, North Africa, Rumania, and Hungary. About two-thirds of the wheat produced in the United States is used to feed its own people, and a little more than a fifth is sold abroad. These figures have varied in recent years during which federal control has been in vogue.

In noting important developments in our study of history we must not forget that Negro who opened this long chapter in the history of the new world. To omit his story would give an incomplete history and deprive the public of the whole truth. This Negro pioneer deserves an imposing monument among the great agriculturists of our age.



"TAOS"
ANOTHER OF THE "SEVEN CITIES"
SOUGHT BY ESTEVANICO

THE LAND OF VISIONS UNLIMITED

The Georgia planters objected to the presence of the Indians in the territory lying between that state and the Mississippi and finally influenced the Federal Government to force them to leave for the other side of this stream. The fertile soil west of Georgia was needed to expand the cotton cultivation and make that crop king. The South had reaped great profits from the production of cotton on such new soil, and more of it they said they must have to build up that region which became Florida and Alabama. No planter had any thought about the welfare of the Negroes and Indians who would have to suffer in leaving their native soil to find new homes in an unknown wilderness. These two classes of the population were considered as savages—persons inferior to the planters—and these “inferiors” had no rights which the other people should respect.

The Indians and Negroes bore it grievously that they had to move out to find new homes. It was cruel torture to force them to leave their familiar hunting grounds and to settle in a wilderness. Neither the Indians nor their enemies, however, knew what lay in the unbroken wilderness. The fabulous treasures which the Spaniards had once sought in the Southwest had passed from their minds like a dream of a summer night, but beneath the soil of the land on which the Indians and their Negro companions were forced to dwell was a real treasure—petroleum. Cotton had not yet fully had its day, but when its day was done as a result of the Civil War the country entered upon the new industrial era which brought us the opportunity of supplying the modern world with carbon oil.

Fortunately or unfortunately this oil could be pumped in large quantities from the very soil to which the Indians had been forced to go many years before. What,

then, would the American exploiters do to dislodge these Indians and Negroes and take possession of these oil fields. Here the ill-designing adventurers penetrating the West were puzzled. The Federal Government had long been used in making treaties which it violated without hesitation as soon as a number of Americans found it to their advantage to dislodge the Indians. The Government often solemnly signed treaties with the Indians guaranteeing to them forever their present territory, but “forever” meant simply as long as it was convenient to the Federal Government to stand by such a treaty. This dishonest diplomacy in dealing with the Indians had been carried so far, however, that the American people began to have a sense of shame for such a scandalous record. The Civil War, moreover, had brought about the emancipation of the Negroes, followed by guarantees in the War Amendments, especially the Fourteenth, which guaranteed that no citizen should be deprived of his life or property without due process of law.

To deprive the Negroes and Indians of these lands newly advertised as most valuable methods beyond the reach of the law had to be resorted to. By some sort of purchase a large tract in the center of Indian Territory was secured for settlement by migrants. The exploiters rushed into Indian territory by the thousands as soon as the Federal Government declared that area open for settlement in 1889. Uninhabited spots in the morning of almost any day became settlements of 25,000 and 30,000 inhabitants before night. Claims and counter claims were set up, and bloody conflicts ensued in the effort to possess and dispossess. Those who survived the internecine strife and got their claims before the courts soon realized how hazardous was the administration of jus-

tice where courts had little to rely upon but personal evidence to determine priority and preemption. Fortunate were those in a position to employ able counsellors to advance their cause. It was not exactly a case of selling justice, but the poor had much difficulty in overcoming the rich in the taking up of lands in the new region. These migrants fixed their eyes on other lands beyond the limits of the first purchase.

The poor Negroes involved in this rush suffered much worse than the Indians. Only those Negroes who had more Indian than African blood, or who had been so incorporated into the tribes as to be essential to them had much of a chance to hold their lands. The Negroes, like the Indians, moreover, suffered in not being sufficiently alert as to the methods used by adventurers who induced them to make agreements which they did not understand. Negro orphans possessed of such lands were placed under guardians by decree of corrupt courts, and the guardians finally worked out schemes to obtain full possession of their property.

Another method frequently employed was that of having a Negro property owner declared of unsound mind when he was thoroughly competent to handle his affairs. The guardian appointed by the court could then so administer the property as to deprive him altogether of it. Frequently Negro property owners in need borrowed money by unknowingly signing agreements which alienated their valuable possessions for small sums of fifty or a hundred dollars. The Negro did not realize what he had done until notified by the court to give up his property to the one who had deceived him. All these methods, of course, were used in dispossessing the Indians, but much less so. Indians could be otherwise

(Continued on page 153)

NEGRO HISTORY IN NEW YORK CITY

BY ALICE CITRON

The following essays were written by students of the graduating class of Public School 184 in response to a contest conducted by our Association on the subject: The Importance of Negro History.

The winning essay by Charles Phillips in 9B-1 was read at the graduation exercises and the award was a volume of *Negro Makers of History*. The next two essays received awards of defense stamp booklets. We reprint these essays in honor of Negro History Week celebrated from February 8 to February 15. Mr. Norman London was faculty adviser.

THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE NEGRO

The advancement of the Negro up to a few years ago was only given a brief account, if any, in newspapers and books. The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was organized in Chicago, September 9, 1915, by Dr. Carter G. Woodson. This association was organized so that other peoples throughout the world would better understand the position of the Negro as a prominent factor in history.

The Negro race has not been given credit for what it has done in Africa, Europe and America. Long before the Negro was brought to America he had a history and still has not been surpassed by others easily.

Historians say that Africans first discovered the use of iron; first domesticated the sheep, goat and cow. It was the Mossi tribe who first originated trial by jury.

When Europeans first began to enter Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries, they found the people there as far advanced in their political and social organizations as the Europeans themselves were in the ninth century.

When the Negro came to Europe he showed his fine character by producing great men. Angelo Soli-

mann was honored as a general in the service of the Holy Roman Empire. Alexander Pushkin was one of the greatest writers of modern Russia. Alexander Dumas became one of France's greatest authors who thrilled us with such novels as "Count of Monte Cristo," "The Three Musketeers," "The Corsican Brothers," and scores of other stories.

In America, the Negro played his part, too. When Balboa discovered the Pacific he was accompanied by 30 Negroes. When Cortes got control of Mexico there was a Negro with him who, finding in his rice a few grains of wheat, planted them, and success followed. The wheat grew, and thus this Negro became the first to plant wheat in America.

The Negro in the crude parts of America was among those who cleared the forests, drained the swamps, tilled the soil, and brought forth rich harvest. The Negro in America took up trades which are still common today as carpenters, boatbuilders, blacksmiths and many other jobs where labor was needed.

The Negro race also gave forth great scientists as Lislet Geoffroy, a European, and George Washington

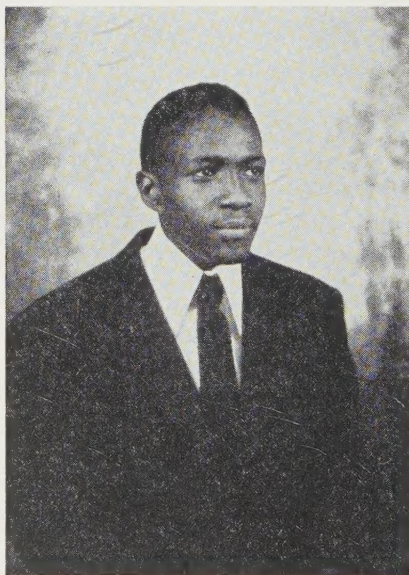
Carver, the chemist that found over 200 uses for the peanut. As inventors the race gave James Forten, who perfected a machine for handling sails. Henry Blair patented two corn harvesters. Jan Matzeliger invented the machine for making shoes. Many people today do not know that it was a Negro by the name of Solomon Harper who invented the aerial torpedo and patented it in 1911. The aerial bomb has just been put into use in this war. Solomon Harper also served in World War I and advanced to corporal, sergeant and later sergeant major. The Negro has shown that, if given a chance, he, too, can succeed in this world.

CHARLES PHILLIPS

THE STUDY OF NEGRO HISTORY

Through the years the public schools have turned out millions of able-bodied, well-taught, self-reliant men and women. They have taken up many interesting subjects. They have taught Latin, French, German, Spanish and numbers of other foreign languages. They have taught science and medicine. They have thrown light on mathematics and philosophy. They have made art known to the American people. Now they are planning to undertake a new subject. It is history. Is history new? No, but Negro history is a new and different subject. It is utterly important that this subject be taught not only to the American people but to all the world.

The American people have struggled through blood, toil and hardships to the proud moment where America stands today. And the Negroes, too, have struggled. Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver are large figures in Negro history. Joe Louis, Paul Robeson and Marian Anderson are some modern figures. Behind all of these names is a story of struggle and



CHARLES PHILLIPS

(Continued on page 153)

The Land of Visions Unlimited

(Continued from page 151)

reached. To carry their point whites intermarried with the Indians; but race prejudice would not permit them thus to deal with the Negroes, and there were not so many Negro owners thus to dispose of.

All Negroes, however, were not deprived of their lands. Some persons of African blood remained in possession of these properties long enough to see them exploited and to count themselves among the wealthy. A few Negroes of that region are still thus rated. These valuable lands, however, have not remained long with the original owners. Negroes, like so many Indians who were first on the ground, had no knowledge of managing large fortunes, and had to be advised by others who took their property as compensation for such advice and management. Among the Indians of this day there were no leaders like Negro Abraham.

When the writer was in Oklahoma about eight years ago, one of these former wealthy Negroes was pointed out to him as a man who once had so much money that he lighted his fifty-cent cigars with five-dollar bills. The writer met in Chicago about this time another of this wealthy class of Negroes. At the hotel where his family stopped they had the most expensive suite available, and they used three of the most costly automobiles on the market. These very Negroes have lost their possessions since that time and have had to seek relief.

This brings us to the most recent chapter in this drama. Neither the original settlers in the western oil area nor the Negroes who went with them to that region now possess most of the wealth of those parts. Some one in speaking of Texas, which has in its northeastern section a rich oil domain, said that the people of Texas are very poor. While they have a rich state it is owned in New York City. This is likewise the situation in the former Indian Territory which became

Oklahoma in 1907. The rush brought adventurers who deprived the Negroes and Indians of their oil lands, but these exploiters were later swallowed up by the large combinations and trusts which now own practically all the property in the United States. In the midst of such powerful rivalry it was difficult for an individual or small company to bore for oil and, when discovered, sell it in competition with corporations which were in a position to dispose of theirs in such large quantities as to undersell the small operator. After facing this problem for a few years he usually sold out to some large company. Most of such holdings which are not now in the hands of the trusts are nevertheless leased by them to their advantage, since only through them can the individual reach the market.

Negro History in New York City

(Continued from page 152)

hardships, courage and determination. The Negro has contributed a great deal to the making of America. The study of Negro history in schools as a definite subject is a great necessity to the American people, and such knowledge will do much good for unity.

CALVIN CHRISTIAN

The English Teacher in War Time

From Mr. Frank L. Hayes, of *The Chicago Daily News*, came the following on February 13, 1942: Dear Dr. Woodson:

May I call your attention to the enclosed folder and particularly to the passage: "In the development of democratic unity we claim to recognize the rights and contributions of minorities . . . especially the Negro. . . . A considerable proportion of the literature to be taught in the schools shall be chosen with its suitability for these purposes in mind . . ." Quoted from a statement of the Planning Commission of the National Council of Teachers of

English. Knowing that you have been a pioneer in advocating a part of this program, it occurs to me that perhaps you may care to offer comment for publication in a brief letter, two or three paragraphs."

The significant paragraphs of the folder follow:

b) We seek to unify the entire Western Hemisphere by promoting greater understanding and appreciation of the culture and ideals of Central and South America and closer cultural association with Canada.

c) In the development of democratic unity we aim to recognize the rights and contributions of minorities in this country as well as those of majorities, especially of the Negro, the Semitic peoples, and those loyal aliens who may be under suspicion at the moment because of descent from enemy nations.

d) At the same time, we seek to promote through the study of literature a sense of unity among the various sections of our country and among the various social and economic groups represented in our national life.

e) A considerable proportion of the literature to be taught in the schools shall be chosen with its suitability for these purposes in mind. Some of it has been taught for many years. Some of it will need reorienting in terms of the present scene. Other materials must be sought out and brought into the schools. Two types of presentation of the democratic ideal are available. One is patriotic literature as such, which *proclaims* the principles of democracy and arouses emotional response to them. The other, even more important, is illustrative of life under democratic conditions or of individuals struggling with fortitude to maintain a democratic way of life. It aims to *interpret* rather than to *proclaim*. Some materials will give positive evidence of the incorporation of such ideals into the lives of individuals and homes and communities. Others will reveal violations of the same principles. So far as possible, the positive presentation is preferable.

The Roanoke Branch Unfurls Its Banner

One of the important results of the recent work of Miss Hilda V. Grayson, field representative of the Association, was the stirring up of the people of Roanoke to the extent that they have organized the Roanoke Branch of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. This undertaking has started off promisingly with 20 active members and a number of sustaining members increasing from day to day.

This circle of friends intelligently interested in evaluating the background and the present status of their race will address themselves to the following:

1. To save the records of the Negro and send them to the central office in Washington, D. C., where they are being assorted and classified and kept under fireproof protection to be used by investigators from all parts of the world.

2. To write the life histories of the "near great" but useful Negroes of whom editors and authors take no account, and to publish the records of local institutions which the "near great" established.

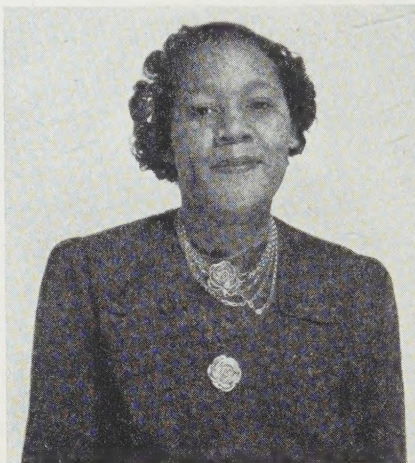
3. To promote the actual study of the Negro in a club or class proceeding according to a definite outline and under the supervision of the Director of the Association.

4. To secure the cooperation of a number of persons who will learn to tell intelligently to children in schools and churches interesting stories of distinguished Negroes who have achieved things worth while as promoters of business, professional men, teachers, and ministers.

To root more deeply the work of the Association in the mind of the younger people now in school a juvenile group will be organized under the supervision of the Roanoke Branch. Members of the Junior Society will be drawn not only from schools but from groups in churches desiring to associate their leaders with those who meet from

time to time to study their history according to a well defined plan. The Branch finds it possible also to draw upon people of this class living in nearby towns and communities.

Mr. L. A. Sydnor is the president and Miss S. F. Terrell is the secretary of the Roanoke Branch. Under their leadership the people of the city will endeavor to do more to inform themselves in this sphere



MISS S. F. TERRELL

and will help others thus to profit by the effort to save and publish the records of the Negro that the race may not become a negligible factor in the thought of the world.

Hilda V. Grayson in the Field

In extending the work of the Association into the remote parts of the country Miss Hilda V. Grayson, field representative of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, is making a special effort to reach the teachers through their annual conventions. Wherever the opportunity presents itself she addresses the general body of teachers on the work she represents and their relation to the effort. She follows this feature with an actual demonstration of what is being done to teach the life and history of the Negro in the state and how it may be improved. She

has engagements with the State Teachers' Associations in South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi, and she has recently served likewise those in Delaware, Virginia and West Virginia.

In order to secure the close cooperation of the schools throughout each state Miss Grayson calls upon all schools thus interested to bring to these conventions exhibits of their work during the year. The sort of demonstration desired is set forth in the following suggestions:

A DEMONSTRATION OF THE STUDY OF NEGRO LIFE AND HISTORY

SUGGESTED EXHIBITS: Scenes made up of marionettes, miniature buildings, objects, scrapbooks, booklets, sand table models, friezes, posters, bulletin board displays, and other projects that are generally worked out in school circles.

SUGGESTED THEMES: Contributions of the Negro in music, drama, fiction, education, pioneering, religion, business, architecture, science, engineering, invention, painting, sculpture, or other fields.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: Any materials generally used in your regular school activity work, such as clay, cardboard, paints, glue, crayon, paper, imitation bricks, logs, sand, board, pictures, newspapers, magazine clippings, and the like.

SUGGESTED SOURCE OF INFORMATION: Books listed on enclosed circular.

(Continued on page 167)



L. A. SYDNOR

The Negro in the Southwest

(Continued from page 148)

slaved Indians to do the work on the plantations and in the mines; but the Indians would not work, and they were thrown aside as "unprofitable servants." Next the planters brought in Negroes from Africa. These Negroes, like the Indians, had not been accustomed to hard work, but a way of escape was not so easy for the Negroes as that of the Indians who understood the wilderness and could join their tribes without much difficulty. When the Negroes learned more about the back country and the Indians they also found out how to run away from this drudgery of the plantations. The Indians received most of these fugitives and made some of them slaves, but they married freely Negro women fugitives. All Negroes among the Indians eventually became free.

Here arises the important question as to how these two widely different races so easily came to an understanding. The fact is, however, that they were not so different as we have sometimes imagined. Scientists now tell us that these Negroes and Indians had much in common. In the first place, their customs were very much alike. We do not know how it happened that these two peoples had so much in common, but Leo Wiener, a Harvard professor, wrote three books to prove that Negroes visited the shores of America before the great-great-grandfathers of Eric the Red and Christopher Columbus were born. Other authors also say that there was some contact of Negroes from Africa with the natives of America many centuries ago.

The reasons for believing that Africans visited these shores before the Europeans came are various. Explorers in the days of Columbus found in caves of the Isthmus of Darien skulls which were identified

as those of African Negroes. They found also in the language of the Indian the words "tobacco," "canoe," and "buckra" which appear only in the African language. Fetishism, a religious practice of the Africans, is very much like fetishism among the American Indians. It is clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that the culture of the African brought into America was much more like that of the American Indian than like that of the European. If the enslaved African succeeded in escaping to the Indians across the frontier before he became Europeanized by long contact, he would have little difficulty in making himself happy among the Indians. Of course, when the Negro reached the stage of thinking and doing as other early settlers he had no desire to cross the frontier to live among the Indians except when forced by crime or the cruelty of slavery. The stream of Negroes, although diminishing with the passing of years, nevertheless, continued.

Long before Indian life seemed unattractive to the Negroes, however, a considerable number settled among the tribes and remained there. The extent of this migration can be appreciated today only by the fact that, although the Negroes were easily absorbed among the Indians by interbreeding, there is among them today a large element showing distinctly African features, and all but unadulterated Negroes still dwell among them. All Indians except one or two tribes freely interbred with Negroes, and these were not so fastidious as some authors have said. In their last stand in the Southwest Negroes have left an impression upon the people and the country.

In more than one respect the Negroes were especially helpful to the Indians. Having lived among both races, the Negro refugees could direct the Indians wisely in their dealings with the white settlers and save them from many

misfortunes by clarifying matters which their limited contact with the European settlers could not enable the aborigines to understand. The Negroes, both from their African background and from their contact with the settlers along the Atlantic, had more knowledge of agriculture and had reached a higher stage of culture than the Indians. Among these people in the wilds, therefore, the Negro tended to give their life more stability in becoming more permanently attached to the soil. The Negro, more of a farmer than a hunter, tended to bring the Indian to a realization of the value of the soil. In thus strengthening the position of the Indians the Negroes made more difficult the task of the white settlers who desired to dispossess them from decade to decade to make room for pioneers who rapidly pushed their way from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In the Southwest where much of the desert extended the whites were not so easily attracted and the Indians remained there longer than in some other parts. Their calm was not greatly disturbed until oil was discovered in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, and the mad rush of exploiters dispossessed many Indians and practically all Negroes of their valuable oil lands. Likewise went the possession of other mineral wealth of that section.

The mere possession of wealth, however, is not an achievement in itself. No one has ever erected a monument to a millionaire merely because of his riches. In doing their part to stabilize the life of the Indians and to facilitate their negotiations with exterminating conquerors the Negroes rendered a distinctly valuable service in the making of America. Without their flight to the Indians slavery would have had less of a safety valve. Without the assistance which the Negro refugees rendered the Indians they might have been more ruthlessly exterminated to the discredit of the people of the United States.



APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

(Seminole Tribe)
 A CALENDAR TO COLOR
 INDIAN-NEGRO FAMILY
 (- LOIS MAILOU JONES -)

CHILDREN'S PAGE

A Calendar to Color

AN INDIAN-NEGRO FAMILY

Seminole villages are very colorful. The Indian costumes are gay in colors. The squaw, when making a garment, joins the bright strips of blue, red, yellow, black, orange, purple and white cloth to form striped and zig-zag patterns. Beads are plentiful, and it is the custom for the women to wear pounds of them about the neck.

Seminole peoples are known to be slow, proud, truthful and devoted to the family. Even today they are devoted to their ancestors and their customs. They accept the Negro, but not the white man into their tribal life. Even today they continue their tribal independence.

The Calendar to Color shows a Seminole Indian with his Negro wife and child before their wigwam. It is advisable to allow the children freedom in their selection of color. The following color scheme is merely suggested as an aid to the teacher. Color the sky a brilliant blue-green and the tree trunks, brown. The foliage vines and grasses are a deep jungle green. Color the ground a light sand tone. The floor and poles of the wigwams may be yellow. The roof of palmetto leaves may be yellow-brown. The interior of the roof may be dark brown or black to indicate shadow.

Stripe the white garments with red, yellow-green, orange, black, etc. Color the baby's dress red and the father's trousers brown and jacket blue. His hat may be red and blue with white feathers. The Negro mother and the baby have brown complexions, while the father is a copper color. The two women in the background are also Negroes.

The lettering and birthday dates may be red. Black crayon or pencil may be used for the remaining numbers. As usual, water color or crayon may be used for coloring and hectograph copies of the drawing may be made for each child in the classroom.

The important birthday dates are as follows:

APRIL 1. Thomas Fowell Buxton, British emancipationist, born, 1786.

APRIL 3. Edward Everett Hale, anti-slavery writer, born, 1822.

APRIL 3. James Madison Bell, Negro poet, born, 1826.

APRIL 4. Thaddeus Stevens, distinguished reconstructionist, born, 1792.

APRIL 5. Booker T. Washington, "born," 1856.

APRIL 9. Surrender of Robert E. Lee, 1865.

APRIL 10. Judge John Belton O'Neal, of South Carolina, advocate of the enlightenment of the slaves, born, 1793.

APRIL 12. Battle of Fort Pillow during the Civil War, 1864.

APRIL 13. Thomas Jefferson, advocate of freedom, born, 1743.

APRIL 14. First abolition society in the United States founded, 1775.

APRIL 16. Emancipation in the District of Columbia, 1862.

APRIL 17. Francis Williams, first Negro college graduate in the Western Hemisphere, published Latin poem in 1758.

Questions on the March Issue

1. Compare and contrast the struggle of the Negro in the Land of Cotton with his struggle in the Upper South, in the Border States, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York.
2. Tell the story of a "Practical Philosopher."
3. Of the various men of distinction in South Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, which one or ones do you think had the greatest number of obstacles to face and contributed the most to American culture? Give the basis for your decision.
4. Can you think of any woman of today that has a parallel life in the struggle of establishing a school for Negro women as that of Lucy Laney?

5. In what part of the country do Negroes own the most land in proportion to their population? The most business enterprises?
6. In what part of the country do Negroes have the most professional men in proportion to their population? Can you give an explanation in this case?
7. In what part of the country have Negroes the most influence in politics in proportion to their population. How do you account for this condition?
8. In what ways have you observed that individuals and groups of Negroes have made the most progress? With the help of others? Or depending mainly upon themselves and their own people?
9. What is the difference between *philanthropy* and *charity*? Can a man depend upon either and succeed with a great undertaking?
10. In what way have you been benefited by your study of the Negro? What impression has the record of the Negro left upon your mind?

Book of the Month

Shakespeare in Harlem, by Langston Hughes (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., price \$2.50), is a volume worthy of notice. This is a book of poetry which follows the usual trend of the author, who is regarded by many as the Negro "Poet Laureate." His poems are apparently in a humorous vein, but at the same time they show the deepest thought as to the serious condition of the Negro. In this way Hughes tries to interpret the feeling of his persecuted people. The medium which the poet has chosen as the expression of this thought is the blues. To him all the world is sad and dreary everywhere he roams, and still he can laugh in the hope for a brighter day.

These poems are very simple—in words which are familiar to most children. Yet children may fail to reach the depth of the thought which these words convey. In the hands of alert teachers who desire to clarify the Negro child's understanding of his present position in this country this work will be a valuable asset in the teaching of realistic literature. These poems tell the truth without arousing any feeling of bitterness which we sometimes find in inflammatory verse.

These poems, moreover, cover a wide range. They deal with situations in all stages of struggle where Negroes contend with the problems of life. The picture, therefore, is national although sectional. For this broad point of view and thorough grasp of things as they exist today, Langston Hughes deserves credit.

THE SATURDAY MORNING ART CLASS



ODESSA MCKENZIE

The Saturday Morning Art Class in Washington, D. C., is a project of Lois Mailou Jones, who since 1933 has worked with groups of children in the creative arts. Mlle. Celine Tabary, who comes from the Académie Julian in Paris, assists Miss Jones with the teaching.

Some twenty-two children are enrolled in the school which is conducted at Miss Jones' studios. The boys and girls meet once a week throughout the school year. This year, the school offered tuition scholarships to Lois Grey of Douglass Simmons, and Jennie Dowling who attends Garnett Patterson Junior High School. Two scholarships were also awarded by the Art teachers in the Washington Public Schools, Divisions 10-13. The recipients were William Taylor of Shaw Junior High School and Julietta Randolph of Browne Junior High School.

The work is chiefly creative. Some of the ideas grow out of poems, stories, African myths, musical selections, or group discussions. Pupils are interested in depicting street scenes, people, the life they know. Trips are made to the Zoo, where the children are afforded an excellent opportunity for sketching. Originality of thought is emphasized at all times, with the teachers serving merely as advisors and counselors. Consequently the work which results expresses the

thoughts and creative abilities of our Negro boys and girls of today.

Last month there was a desire on the part of the children to create "posters for defense." Slogans were written by the students and these in turn were incorporated into the poster designs.

The interest in the making of the posters finally developed into a poster contest which was sponsored by Mrs. L. M. Simmons of the Grimké School. Prizes were offered by the Associated Publishers of Washington. The contest closed February 28; and the jurors, Mrs. Rosa Nixon Hampton, supervisor of art in the Public Schools, Divisions X-XIII, and Mr. William H. Calfee, artist-sculptor and president of the Washington Guild of Artists, met at the Grimké School and picked the following winners:

Junior group—1st prize, Lois Grey; 2nd prize, Ann Thurman; 1st honorable mention, Jean Anderson; 2nd honorable mention, Sonia Simmons.

Intermediate group—1st prize, Thurston Ferebee; 2nd prize, Anita McKenzie; 1st honorable mention, Dorothy Ferebee; 2nd honorable mention, Grace Jones.

Senior group—1st prize, Odessa McKenzie; 2nd prize, Hirshell McGinnis; 1st honorable mention, Pauline de Ville; 2nd honorable mention, Jennie Dowling.

As shown in the accompanying illustration, Dr. Carter G. Woodson awarded these prizes after inspecting the exhibit. The first prizes consisted of three books—*Word Pictures of the Great*, *The Child's Story of the Negro*, and *The Picture Poetry Book*. One of the winners could not be present on the occasion of the actual award, but she was just as happy as those who received their prizes in person. The contest brought both joy and inspiration to the participants and encouraged the teachers to work more earnestly for the development of these promising children.



DR. CARTER G. WOODSON PRESENTS *THE PICTURE POETRY BOOK* AND *THE CHILD'S STORY OF THE NEGRO* AS PRIZES TO THURSTON FEREBEE AND LOIS GREY

AMERICAN NEGRO SOLDIERY¹

The largest peace time mobilization for national defense will naturally evoke interest and questions by citizens in all walks of life, and our appearance before you is the result of a similar reaction by the committee on arrangements of your Old North State Medical Society.

The participation of Negroes in the military activities of this country antedates the birth of the nation when historians mention their services in actions with the colonists against the Indians. Although Crispus Attucks was not a soldier his martyrdom early in the struggle of the colonists for freedom can not be ignored when mentioning such heroes of the Revolutionary War as the black patriots—Peter Salem, who distinguished himself at Bunker Hill, and Salem Poore, whose gallantry at Charlestown (Massachusetts) was the occasion for fourteen Continental officers to commend him to Congress. Nor can the black men in Rhode Island who constituted a battalion to help fill General Washington's depleted ranks, together with other units in which they were integrated or separated, be omitted in hastily recounting the evolution of American Negro Soldiery.

It is interesting to note the part played by 1,500 black French soldiers who were brought from Haiti and Martinique by the French fleet under Admiral Count DeGrasse to help consummate the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

From the War of 1812 came two outstanding events: Commodore Oliver H. Perry commanded a force in the victorious Battle of Lake Erie, composed of a large proportion of black men. The commendation of General Andrew Jackson of the Negro soldiers at the Battle of New Orleans behind cotton bale breastworks is inspiring.

With the progress of time and improvement in intellectual attainments of the American people it is not surprising to have history re-

cord a gradual elevation of black men in the armed forces of this country. The Civil War brought several hundred thousand of them under arms. No reliable figures are available on the Negroes who served with the Confederacy. Our historian states: "There was some doubt that the Negro would make a good soldier, and of course the Negro officer was then almost impossible. Massachusetts, however, commissioned ten Negro officers, Kansas three, and the military authorities a considerable number in Louisiana. Negroes held altogether about seventy-five commissions in the Army during the Civil War. Among these officers was Lieutenant Colonel William N. Reed of the First North Carolina, a person well educated in Germany. He made a gallant charge with his regiment at the battle of Olustee, Florida, where he was mortally wounded. . . . Dr. Alexander T. Augusta, who was surgeon of the U. S. C. T., Seventeenth Regiment, was brevetted with Lieutenant Colonel. Dr. John V. DeGrasse was assistant surgeon of the U. S. C. T., Thirty-fifth Regiment. Charles B. Purvis, Alpheus Tucker, John Rapier, William Ellis, Anderson R. Abbott and William Powell were hospital surgeons at Washington, D. C."

Not long after the War between the States, the Congress authorized four Negro regiments in the standing army. They continue today with a record for splendid soldiery in the United States and its possessions. It was a perfectly natural reaction in a democracy to reward loyalty and valor, and the Spanish-American War with its many thousand volunteers to augment the regular forces gave us again emergency colored officers of the line, medical and chaplains' arm of the service. After that peace Negro chaplains were maintained in the Regular Army with their troops, and an occasional officer of the line. Notable among whom we recall with great pride the late Colonel Charles Young, who until recently attained the highest grade of any Negro in

the Regular Army. The ability of Colonel Young to master the rigid scholastic standards of West Point, in addition to his will and determination to bear and forbear the vicissitudes incumbent upon one in such a unique position during his many years of active service, brought the distinction justly bestowed upon him. These traits, in addition to his military efficiency, must have impressed his superiors, and, no doubt, contributed greatly towards blazing the way for successors.

The mobilization for the first World War brought four million citizens under arms, and slightly more than ten per cent of them were colored. The War Department now had ample precedent for the basis of a policy for colored officers which was backed by a sufficiently wholesome public sentiment to overwhelm bigotry, which had no place with the slogans of World War I, still fresh in your memories. Emmett J. Scott, who had held a position of trust and responsibility for a number of years at Tuskegee Institute, was named special assistant to the Secretary of War. In this present emergency the same post is held by William H. Hastie, formerly federal judge for the Virgin Islands and dean of law at Howard University.

The War Department authorized an Officers' Training Camp for Negroes at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, to which candidates for commissions came from the ranks of the Regular Army, the professions, colleges and business for the intensive training courses offered by such organizations. In spite of the exacting requirements, which caused a toll of rejections and failures, 675 colored officers of the line were commissioned there in October, 1917. At the time of the conclusion of this school a Medical Officers' Training Camp at the same station was authorized. By permission, some physicians and dentists resigned their candidacies in the O. T. C. to accept commissions in the colored M. O. T. C. About four score med-

¹An address delivered at the Old North State Medical Convention at Rocky Mount, North Carolina, in June, 1941.

ical and dental officers were put through an intensive course of training for that arm of the service. Subsequently drafted men with exceptional qualifications were permitted to attend special training camps for officers. The greater part of these colored officers were assigned to the Ninety-Second Division, the first complete Negro combat division, which trained about nine months in the United States and saw combat service during its eight months in the American Expeditionary Force. However, this division was never brought together until it reached France. This division had its own infantry brigade, its artillery brigade and special troops as were provided in tables of organization at that time. The tribute of Brigadier General Sherburne, who commanded the artillery brigade in the Ninety-second Division, to the colored soldier as an artillerist may have influenced the War Department recently to create two Regular Army anti-aircraft artillery regiments for Negroes.

The Ninety-Third Division was not complete and was constituted by four infantry regiments of national guardsmen brought to war strength by inducted men. The 370th Infantry (the old 8th Illinois) was commanded by a Negro, Colonel Dennison, with a full complement of colored officers; the remaining three regiments had a majority of white officers. All of these regiments were brigaded with the French, and, if we judge by the regimental citations, the old 8th and the other three Negro national guard regiments gave equally good account of themselves, which was irrefutable evidence that colored officers could stand the test of fire with their men—the supreme test of command and action. Some of you may recall that the District of Columbia battalion of the 372nd Infantry was ordered to guard President Woodrow Wilson and the White House shortly after the declaration of war against Germany and her allies which was marked by episodes of sabotage and espionage. The implication was clear.

By contrast we may note that in the Ninety-second Division no colored officer attained a grade higher than a major, notable among whom was the division judge advocate, the commanding officer of the ammunition train, Major Dean, and one medical officer, Major Ward, who was given a special assignment with a railroad operating team. Most of our colored officers were company commanders and company officers for infantry, machine gun and ambulance units.

In this connection we are proud to read into this record a letter of commendation, or citation, for two of our field hospitals jointly operating on this particular front, with a majority of colored medical officers, and which during service in France was assigned a special female nursing complement which was transported daily to and from the front:

December 15, 1918

“From: Chief Surgeon 2nd Army
To: Division Surgeon, 92nd Division, A. E. F.

Subject: Field Hospitals at Millery

1. I desire to express my admiration and appreciation of the splendid hospital organized and administered by the Medical Department of the 92nd Division at Millery.

Your department has received most favorable comments by the Army Commander, Second Army, the Sanitary Inspector, Second Army, Chief Medical Consultant, Second Army, and the officers in charge of the section in Sanitation in the office of the Chief Surgeon, American Expeditionary Forces, and all of the medical officers who have visited the institution.

The transportation and hospitalization of the battle casualties and respiratory diseases have been accomplished in accord with the principles of military surgery and preventive medicine, which reflects the intelligence and training on the part of the officers, nurses and enlisted men of the Medical Department of the 92nd Division, in which pride may justly be felt.

C. R. REYNOLDS,
Colonel, Medical Corps, USA.”

We reverently note the supreme sacrifice by one of our medical officers, Lieut. Urbane F. Bass, M. R. C., who volunteered an assignment with one of the regiments of the Ninety-third Division and who fell mortally wounded advancing with them in attack. It was a source of pride to learn from one of my A. E. F. colleagues, ex-Lieut. Rufus S. Vass, M. R. C., that in the years that have passed a son of the late Lieut. Bass has recently graduated in the honorable profession of his heroic father.

After being mustered out of service many of the colored officers and men gradually became readjusted in civil life, a number to my personal knowledge occupying governmental positions of responsibility and trust; others have profitably engaged in business pursuits. A number, too, have found time from private pursuits to identify themselves actively with such veteran and patriotic organizations as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. We have yet to hear of one who became susceptible to any “ism” but Americanism.

Not long after the return of peace Congress set itself to the task of creating the National Defense Act, which, though amended, remains basically the same. This legislation obviated the future necessity for quick training of emergency officers and emphasized a continuation of training course in military science for college students such as was initiated during the World War known as the Students' Army Training Corps. Tuskegee, Hampton, Howard, Wilberforce and others among them were approved for such training. Instructors were assigned from the Regular Army, or from picked reserve officers. Thus, during the two decades, several hundred Negro college graduates have upon graduation from their college been commissioned in the Officers' Reserve Corps. Unfortunately, too, during the years too many of them have not availed themselves of the special summer active duty training camp facilities, or assiduously followed their correspondence courses,

and I suspect that this mobilization would have found more regiments authorized for our officers had there been more with active commissions on the eligible list.

The three Negro national guard regiments have been for some time on active duty training, two as anti-aircraft units and one rifle outfit. A Negro colonel commands each, and it is perfectly natural to suppose that their complement of officers is colored, the regular army instructor being the exception. Still a fourth colored regiment is commanded by a Negro colonel with a reserve commission. This accounts for four full colonels now in camp with their regiments and roster of officers which is breaking any previous precedent. Three of these units have a regimental surgeon, colored, a major; the fourth has a vacancy, temporarily at least.

Last fall a public announcement from the White House made known the fact that some colored officers would be assigned to Regular Army units for training—these were to be from the medical and chaplains' branch of the service. Subsequent announcements advised that Negro medical officers and Negro nurses would be ordered to active duty with two large station hospitals, one at Fort Bragg, the other at Livingstone, La. Reference has been made to the highest installation in the medical department for colored officers in the World War and the commendation received therefor. Whether this precedent prompted the War Department to attempt an experiment with a still higher installation for colored medical officers we venture not to say. Nevertheless our officers and nurses, although not in full force, nor full swing, are on duty and exploding a fallacy that the races can not work together in unity for national defense. We would almost go so far as to make the assertion that any incident or group of incidents which would tend to disrupt this experiment should be investigated thoroughly

for sabotage motives by our military intelligence department.

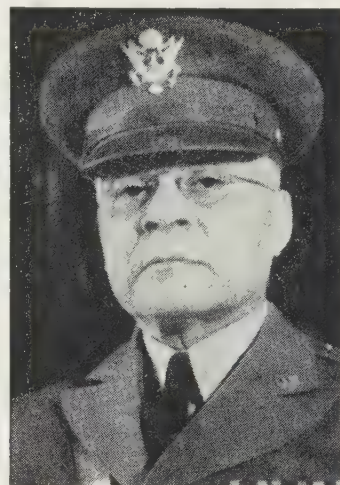
You will understand, too, that this is the first time that your own graduate nurses are being commissioned as second lieutenants in the Army Nurse Corps, through the local offices of the American Red Cross. Although the announced quota is very limited, it would be a splendid patriotic gesture to find a large response from our graduate nurses between 22 and 35 years to submit themselves for physical examination.

To be sure this requires a pioneering spirit on the part of our young nurse who must be willing to remove herself from her civilian sphere, her friends, her social life, and immediate home ties to meet the exacting requirements of these humanitarian and patriotic duties. She must, in a measure, provide her own diversion, when off duty, and be prepared to live courageously a sacrificial life for the term of her appointment. And, may I suggest, that your Auxiliary could visit the Public Relations Officer, as did a committee from your organization visit the officers and wards, and arrange to do a patriotic turn or two from the vanguard of the nurses now on duty. We suspect that there is much your ladies could do for their pleasure.

These rather hastily recounted high-spots on Negro soldiery and the Negro officer have been brief, owing to the time allotted. It is only timely to add that the work of the colored medical officers at the Fort Bragg Station Hospital is proceeding smoothly, and, we believe, efficiently. Members of the group are assigned according to their private professional training in the medical and surgical sections; we have no hesitancy in stating that those in respective sections will do their work well.

Over a century and half of slow but steady progress in Negro soldiery has finally brought reward for merit to one of our group for over forty years of faithful and efficient service. A few months ago, upon the recommendation of the

President of the United States, the name of Benjamin O. Davis made history when the Senate gave its approval for the first Negro to become a brigadier general in the Regular Army. General Davis, though near the age for retirement, is publicly reported in active command of a cavalry brigade at Fort Riley, Kansas. In the absence of press reports to the contrary it is natural to assume that his command there is following the natural order of events with his subordinate officers of the other group, and exploding the fallacy so often put forth that such assignments to command will alter the efficient working of the military machine.



GEN. B. O. DAVIS

We all look forward with pride and appreciation to the attainments of General Davis, and commend him for having a son, a West Point graduate, now on active duty with the Regular Army in the grade of captain. This June, West Point, we trust, will graduate another Negro cadet, who like the few who preceded him, will take his place in the Army and prove to those who may sit in judgment upon him that, if given the opportunity, he will acquit himself as an officer and a gentleman and a credit to Negro soldiery.

Precedent in many cases is used as a basis for policy. In World

(Continued on page 167)

THE NEGRO TEACHER IN NATIONAL DEFENSE

HER ROLE

The Negro teacher is more than a transmitter of cultures or a preponderator of educational principles. She is the beacon in the darkness . . . she is the signal at the cross roads. She is not only moulding the morale and character of the future generations, but she is also forming the opinion and personality of hundreds of thousands of Negro youth. At the moment, whether these youth are broad-minded Americans, willing and ready to defend this, their native land, or whether they are discouraged, disillusioned introverts, rests not so much with the church which scarcely boasts a weekly five-hour contact; not so much with the home, that in many cases has lost its purpose and goal, but with the school and the Negro teacher, whose daily contacts, whose opinions and idealism may be either a source of hope or inspiration or a well of hatred and self pity.

Here, the school has indeed retouched and remounted the picture of society with its liabilities and its assets, its prejudices and its justice.

THE DOOR IS SHUT

From grammar school through college, the Negro youth is acutely aware that this is not literally a government "of the people, for the people, and by the people." He realizes, too deeply, that preparedness is neither the key to success nor the passport to opportunity. Too often has he heard the cry of "workers for defense," "economic opportunities for everyone," only to find the "door shut" when he "knocks." The very program of National Defense ceases to be National as far as the Negro is concerned. Regardless of his background, his capacities and capabilities, he realizes that in the three

fields of American defense, Air, Army, and Navy, two fields are practically closed, and the other one makes miserly concessions.

America to the Negro youth, instead of being a free land is a "parcelled land." His economic opportunity, his housing facilities, his social enjoyment, yes, even his right to fight for his country is separated, segmented, and parcelled to him.

Why should an alien from almost any port across the seas enjoy greater freedom and privileges than the black youth, who has over served his term as "chestnut puller" for American civilization? The Negro youth does not wish to become white or even live socially with white neighbors; he merely asks for the right to reach his place under the sun: the privilege of having his "earned" dollar commanding the same advantages, the same pleasures and the same respect as his white neighbor's dollar, and not subject to monetary depreciation simply because its owner happens to be a Negro. It is little wonder that he becomes disgruntled and discouraged when he is knocked and kicked about, in this "land of the free and the home of the brave." He gives his pennies for China; he gathers his bundles for Britain; while thousands of black folk along the Mississippi delta are bullied and coerced into economic and political slavery. He salutes his flag and pledges his allegiance thereto, although acutely aware of the diabolic satire in the words, "liberty and justice for all."

MR. HYDE

The aforementioned antithesis constitutes the product that the Negro teacher wrestles with from day to day. Out of this medley of contradictions and this profusion of

prejudices, the Negro teacher must be a sort of "Houdini" in unravelling this entanglement, retouching the picture, eradicating the conclusions, and building up a morale of Americanism.

She cannot deny or ignore these conditions and say they are "little men who aren't there," for then she loses "face," faith, and confidence of her followers. She could never advocate combating injustice with injustice, for this invites other unjust measures and the very end defeats itself.

DR. JEKYLL

No, she must try to span these shortcomings with the "longcomings" that the Negroe does share and possess. She must point out, not only during Negro History Week, but also during every week, the accomplishments of a race which less than a century ago was chained in the fetters of slavery. She must match a George Washington with a Booker T. Washington, a William Jennings Bryan with a Frederick Douglass, an Edgar Allan Poe with a Paul Laurence Dunbar, a Pavlov Nurmi with a Jesse Owens, a Luther Burbank with a George Carver, a George Petty with an E. Simms Campbell, a Gladys Swarthout with a Marian Anderson, yes, and a George Gershwin with a Duke Ellington.

The Negro teacher must give the Negro youth more to stand upon than the printed pages of "standardized texts" that either ignore the race or speak of it in disparaging terms. She must fortify the Negro youth so that when the forces of prejudice strike, they will find his feet embedded in the unshakable foundation of the wisdom that pertains to the accomplishments and achievements of his own race. Such information will not make

(Continued on page 167)

VICTOR SÉJOUR AND HIS TIMES

Any discussion of Victor Séjour, the brilliant quadron dramatist, would be incomplete without brief mention of his contemporaries, many of them unique characters, and some of them well deserving high literary and cultural rank. It is in fact interesting how many of these Creoles of color in New Orleans achieved such high degree of culture and refinement. It is directly traceable to their ancestry, many of whom descended from the best blood of France, Spain, and Italy. Their rise to success in many instances was due in large measure to the superior opportunities afforded them both by society and by their immediate white forbears.

The Latin, and usually very slightly negroid caste and physique, gave beauty to their form and complexion, and added as well a sentimentality of thinking without an exact pattern. There were among them actors, painters, poets, musicians, orators, prose writers, sculptors, artisans, and men of large affairs.

ARTISTS AND MEN OF AFFAIRS

The colored Creole group was generally unique and versatile. They were active in all public affairs into which the rather liberal society admitted them. In the Battle of New Orleans Captain Savary distinguished himself. It was he, says George Doyle, of whom Andrew Jackson speaks as killing General Pakenham in this battle.¹ Captain Savary had distinguished himself in Haiti under the French forces in Toussaint's revolution there,² and was doubtless one of the many refugees that fled to Louisiana upon the downfall of the French on the island.

Hypolite Castra, a distinguished man of his day, wrote the celebrated *La Campagne de 1814-1815* in which he tells of the free men of

color and their part in the Battle of New Orleans.³ Michel Seligny, whose title to large notice lies perhaps more in the fact that he was Victor Séjour's tutor than that he wrote some worth while poems, was a man of large influence as is illustrated by the fact that he was able to carry on his private school for colored Creoles of wealth in the face of hostility from many of the middle class whites.⁴ Armand Lanusse, editor of *Les Cenelles*, an anthology of colored Creole poetry, and perhaps the first ever written, was himself a versatile writer and distinguished orator. But he was particularly a leader on all questions touching the rights, welfare, and advancement of the colored Creole population.⁵

Lanusse called his anthology *Les Cenelles*, symbolizing it to the hawthorn, a shrub used for hedges in the South, bearing white or crimson flowers, and producing a crimson berry. The bush had, withal, thorns, and as such, was regarded.⁶

P. Dalcour, born in New Orleans and educated in Paris, illustrates how wealthy some of these colored Creoles were. Some of his poetry appears in *Les Cenelles*.⁷ Tinker speaks of Dalcour as *né à la Nouvelle-Orléans dans une famille riche*. While a student in Paris he met Victor Hugo and Dumas in social functions. He returned to New Orleans; but, meeting barriers so distasteful to himself, he went back to Paris. He wrote several poems for *Les Cenelles*. He died in Paris as his brother did.⁸

Joe Beaumont, who never left New Orleans during his life of fifty years, was the Creole humorist. Particularly has his *Toucouitou*,

written in Creole dialect, received lasting recognition. The story depicts a Creole girl of color who hungered to be "white"; and, being very fair, she "crossed over," but was discovered. She fled to Havana where color and not race might be the badge of her social classification.⁹ The poem was set to music and became very popular among New Orleans Creoles.¹⁰ Recently an effort has been made to revive interest in this and other Creole productions. He wrote a strikingly humorous poem "*L'Orphelin des Tombeaux*." The march of his imagery goes at a full, delightful and gentle pace. His style is enchanting.¹¹

There were among these Creoles also sculptors, numerous musicians, artisans, inventors and men of affairs. Norbert Rillieux invented a vacuum cup for refining sugar,¹² and a tablet in his honor was inscribed upon *La Bourse de Sucre* in Paris.¹³

Eugene Warbourg, sculptor, was born in New Orleans in 1825, studied under Gabriel, celebrated sculptor, and made excellent models of the Cabildo, and of the Gruenwald and Hermann mansions. His talents excited jealousy and he decided to go to Paris where he further studied for six months. In London he met the duchess of Saxony and for her executed in marble *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Among his chief works are *Le Pêcheur*, the fisherman, and *Le Premier Baiser*, the "first kiss."¹⁴ Warbourg's brother Daniel was also a sculptor of some ability. And there was Joseph Abeillard, one of the finest architects Louisiana has produced. He drew the plans for the sugar sheds and of the Bazaar Market in

³ R. L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, pp. 8-9.

⁴ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 431.

⁵ R. L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, pp. 17-28.

⁶ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane*, p. 272.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ R. L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, pp. 59-63.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ George Longe, a New Orleans principal, in interview.

¹⁴ Charles B. Roussève, *The Negro in Louisiana*, p. 53.

¹ *The Times Picayune*, Jan. 8, 1925; and quoted by Chas. E. Roussève, *The Negro in Louisiana*, p. 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

New Orleans. His son Jules was also an architect of note.¹⁵

Mme. Louise R. Lamotte, born in New Orleans, became a professor in Paris, having passed the examinations with high credit. She was the author of two volumes on student examinations and held the position of directress of the *Collège de jeunes filles d'Abbeville* in France.¹⁶

Though not a product of that period, 1825 to 1870, when Creoles of color wrote, painted, and wrought so creditably that they achieved a distinct place in the culture of their times, Richmond Barthé, born in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, but reared in New Orleans, has done some highly commendable work in clay and marble. Among his most noted works are *The Boy with the Broom*, *The African Dancer*, *The Tortured Negro*, and *Toussaint L'Ouverture*.¹⁷

R. L. Desdunes, the Creole who undertook to preserve the literature of his group, and in preserving much of it earned the literary public's lasting gratitude, was the author of *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*. In doing this he preserved much of the rich and fascinating literature of the colored Creoles of Louisiana—a people who in their unique, romantic and picturesque life challenge respect. Although Desdunes' work is sketchy, wanting in the details and completeness of the work of the scholar, it is withal informing and well reveals the surprisingly elevated social status of many families of the colored Creoles.

VICTOR SÉJOUR, GENIUS OF DRAMA

Victor Séjour, the most versatile writer and brilliant dramatist among that unusual group of free colored Creoles who lived in Louisiana, along the Gulf Coast and Atlantic Seaboard, was born in New Orleans, June 2, 1817, illegitimate son of Eloisa Philippe Fer-

rand, and Juan Francisco Louis, Victor Séjour Marcos, a native of San Marcos (San Dominique).¹⁸ There is a lack of accord as to the date of his birth, varying from 1809 to 1821, but the record in St. Louis Cathedral establishes the correct date of his birth as that above. This *liaison* was legitimized by marriage on January 13, 1825.¹⁹ The child preferred to call himself "Victor Séjour," and by that name he was baptized and known. He was baptized in the St. Louis Cathedral as shown in the register of baptisms for *les hommes de couleur*.²⁰ His father also abbreviated his own name to François Marcou.²¹ He ran a prosperous dyeing establishment at 25 *rue de Chartres*, then the main artery of trade in New Orleans.²²

Victor received his early education under Michel Seligny at *Saint-Barbe Academy*. Seligny himself had received his education in Paris, says Nathalie Populus Mello, herself a brilliant pupil of Seligny.²³

The people of color had many wealthy persons among them, and this group formed an organization known as the *Société d'Economie*, founded by Creole artisans.²⁴ Upon the anniversary of his graduation, at the age of seventeen, he wrote a poem complimentary to these artisans. It made such a profound impression that a subscription was immediately raised to send Victor to Paris to be educated.²⁵ Incidentally, this also shows the prosperous condition of some of these free people of color. His parents terminated his studies in Paris in 1836, for reasons of economy.²⁶ He rested after leaving college for a brief while; then in 1841, he made his literary debut through a heroic

poem appearing in *Les Cenelles*,²⁷ "Le Retour de Napoléon." This poem opened the doors of the literary circles of Paris to him, where he met Alexandre Dumas and Emile Augier.²⁸ It was perhaps his relation to these two famous characters that bent him towards a theatrical career.

Le Théâtre-Français in 1844, enjoyed his *première* adventure in *Diégarius*.²⁹ While it was pompous and sophomoric, it well disclosed the versatility, wide range of imagination and dramatic powers of the author and actor. Diégarius is a Jew who keeps the secret of his racial identity even from his daughter Inès and Don Juan de Tello, her husband; Henry IV, King of Spain; and Abdul-Bekri, the Moorish spy. After twenty years he confesses himself to Inès. An extract of the translation of his confession follows.

Ta mère . . . ? Elle me dit un mot . . .
 "Fuyons!—Ma haine avait fait place
 à ma tendresse.
 Heureux et confiants nous partîmes—
 La Grece
 Nous recut . . . Je devins
 Riche et puissant. Je fus honoré; mais
 en vain,
 Mon injure passée,
 Comme un crime, un remords, pesait
 sur ma pensée.
 Bianca mourut, laissant, dans ses der-
 nières adieux,
 Le désir d'être transportée un jour
 dans ces lieux.
 C'est désir fut ma loi
 Après vingt ans . . . d'exil enfin,
 Nul ne revit en moi Jacob-Eliacin."³⁰

Séjour's star was rising. "Paris theatre-goers came in droves" to witness his plays. The height of his popularity may be imagined, as

²⁷ *Les Cenelles*, pp. 55-59.

²⁸ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 428.

²⁹ Charles B. Roussève, *The Negro in Louisiana*, pp. 84-85.

³⁰ Charles B. Roussève, *The Negro in Louisiana*, pp. 84-85. Translation: Thy mother . . . ? She spoke a word to me. "Let us flee!" My hate yielded to tenderness, Happy and confident we departed Greece received us . . . I became rich and powerful. I was honored, but in vain. My past, suffering, like a crime, a remorse, weighed upon my mind. Bianca (his wife) died, expressing, in her last farewell, a desire to be brought to this land. That wish became my law. After twenty years of exile, after all—none saw in me Jacob-Eliacin."

¹⁵ R. L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, p. 99.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 137-138; Roussève, *The Negro in Louisiana*, pp. 153-154.

¹⁷ Charles B. Roussève, *The Negro in Louisiana*, pp. 153-154.

¹⁸ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 428.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Register of Baptisms*, St. Louis Cathedral, Vol. XV, p. 174. B. No. de l'acte, 871.

²¹ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 428.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

well as his ability and culture appreciated, when it is noted that he became in the hey-day of his career private secretary to Louis Napoleon.³¹

Séjour reached the height of his career about 1853, perhaps, when he was thirty-six years old, and in a prose drama of five acts. All Paris turned out to witness his *premières*.³² A description of the night in the *Porte de Saint-Martin Théâtre* of his first play of *Richard III* may serve to give a faint picture of this quadroon dramatist at the pinnacle. The theater is brilliantly lighted. His voice is clear and vibrant, his movements, precise and elegant, his interpretation and imitation are superb. As the curtain ascends for him a man of olive complexion bows with kingly mien. He commands. His voice rings out over the large audience and the house cheers and cheers. Victor Séjour has "arrived." Describing him a bit more minutely: His brown eyes have the fire and the reflection analogous to the panther on the chase. He is tall, broad-shouldered, and walks with self-assurance. He is descending *le foyer via l'escalier*. He carries a coat on his right arm, and upon close approach to him he resembles *un Français du Midi*. He has heavy lips and is of the exotic type.³³ A woman exclaims from the crowd audibly: *C'est lui! C'est l'auteur, Victor Séjour!* (It is he! It is the author, Victor Séjour.)³⁴ Séjour is at the pinnacle. His star swings to its zenith.

HIS MOTHER IN NEED

One might wonder why these free people of color so much sought and loved France. France was free. America was slave. And while the status of free people of color was in Louisiana more nearly that of the whites, especially the mulatto race, than it was that of the slave, it was not yet without

restraint, and at times these peoples, many of them well educated, refined, wealthy, and of the best blood of France, felt painful humiliation at mistreatment. That accounts for much of the desire for many of them to make Paris their home, not less than its classic atmosphere.

A call from his mother, who evidently had lost her husband by death, brought Séjour hastily to her, for she was in great need.³⁵ But he found his birthplace now unbearable. Whether this state of his mind had been effected by the large freedom and opportunity that Paris had given him or by an actual changed social condition in New Orleans, is not definite. But it was probably both, for it was about this time that Governor Robert Wickliffe had recommended to the Legislature of Louisiana that "Public policy dictates that immediate steps be taken at this time to remove all free Negroes now in the State when such removal can be effected without violation of law. Their example and association have a most pernicious effect upon our slave population."³⁶

Phelps says, "A class of quadroons grew up with alarming rapidity, and by a process of natural selection which may be easily inferred, developed just those characteristics which made them dangerous. Many of these quadroons, endowed with superior mental qualities, and ambitions impossible to the pure Negro, won their freedom, and demanded a place in the civilization of the whites."³⁷

Séjour did not therefore tarry long in the city of his birth. But while in New Orleans, says Nathalie Populus Mello, he formed a *liaison* with an octroon who accompanied him upon his return voyage to Paris. From this *liaison* a son was born.³⁸

³⁵ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 429.

³⁶ A. E. Perkins, *Who's Who in Colored Louisiana*, p. 32.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³⁸ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 429.

Such unions were not unusual at the time. It was taken by the society as an incident. It was the result of a social condition arising out of slavery. The large number of mixed bloods in Louisiana, and generally upon the Gulf and Atlantic coasts at the time, testifies to the general acceptance of this social condition as a matter of course.

Lyle Saxon says, "Now it must not be assumed that these women were prostitutes—they were not. They were reared in chastity, and they were as well educated as the times would permit. These were for the greater part the illegitimate daughters of white men and their quadroon mistresses Their chastity was their chief stock in trade, in addition to their beauty. Their mothers watched them as hawks watch chickens, accompanied them to the balls where white men were admitted and did not relinquish their chaperonage until the daughter had found a suitable "protector." . . . Sometimes these *liaisons* lasted for years, occasionally for life."³⁹

In 1849, Séjour enacted his *La Chute de Sejan*, which seemed to be an adaptation of a play of Ben Johnson by the same name.⁴⁰ In all he wrote for various Parisian theatres twenty-four plays,⁴¹ two of which were composed in collaboration with Théodore Barrière, one with Brésil and one with Jamie (fils). In 1856 he played *Fils de la Nuit*, and yet large audiences were flocking to hear him.⁴² Both a student and an admirer of Shakespeare and Victor Hugo, he probably knew the latter, as they were both noted dramatists. He understood the psychology of an audience. Desdunes says, "Séjour played the stage with the skill of a master."⁴³

³⁹ Lyle Saxon, *Fabulous New Orleans*, p. 181.

⁴⁰ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 428.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 429.

⁴³ R. L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, p. 39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

³² Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 429.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

HIS STAR BEGINS TO WANE

It was in 1874 that Séjour made a contract with *La Gaîté* to play *Cromwell* and *Le Vampire*, both fantastic dramas.⁴⁴ But Séjour is now fifty-seven. The years are beginning to tell their tale. His revenues have stopped. *Il est maintenant malade et pauvre.* (He is now sick and poor.) On September 21, 1874, he fell to galloping consumption. The curtain coming down upon him swiftly, his tragic passing might well remind one of some of his major dramas.

His old friend, Pergallo, does not, however, forsake him in his last darkest hour. He will take care of the funeral. He conducts the sad and poorly attended cortege to Père-Lachaise. The simple casket is ready to be lowered into the tomb. Here we might wonder where were the crowds that followed him to the theaters and lionized him in the hey-day of his brief, passing glory.⁴⁵

A man dressed in a blouse suit followed the cortege weeping inconsolably. Unauthorized he took hold of the cord.⁴⁶

“Permettez-moi, s’il vous plaît; je suis le manœuvre au théâtre.

Cette raison n’est pas suffisante.

Je le sais, mais je vous prie. Il m’aimait. C’est moi qui tirais toujours la corde du bateau dans le Fils de la Nuit.”

Pergallo yielded to Jean the cord.

There are probably two major reasons for Séjour’s relative obscurity in American literature and dramatics. First, Séjour’s mother tongue was French, and second, Negroes are not readily admitted into the circle *littérati*. It would hardly be contended that Dunbar, Du Bois, William Stanley Braithwaite, James Weldon Johnson, Brawley, Locke, Kelly Miller, and Carter G. Woodson, all admittedly writers of great creative ability, experienced no greater difficulty in entering the circles *littérati* than

Ralph Waldo Emerson or Joel Chandler Harris experienced. Every one of them met unusual difficulty. Dunbar, because of his inimitable genius of humor and pathos, and Du Bois because of his rich, rare gift in literary expression as well as his unbending philosophy of that higher law of human equality, literally unbarred doors of color locked against them.

Séjour suffered in America even more than these suffered, for regarding Negroes in terms of letters in 1850 was unthinkable in all but Latin America. In the South it was a crime. *Victor Séjour, comme tant d’autres, était obligé de s’éloigner du pays qui l’avait vu naître.*⁴⁷

Prejudice was sharper against men of color than against women of color in New Orleans, that is, especially when men assumed the intellectual role. The titles *pétite mademoiselle*, *mademoiselle* and *madame* were terms commonly employed in New Orleans when addressing females of color of marked respectability. In the enumeration of free colored people in Woodson’s *Free Negro Heads of Families*, 1830, polite reference frequently occurs, as *Miss Meleric Borel*, *Mme. Jeanette Alexis*, *Mlle. Htte. Bumchartrean*, *Mme. Theophile, Ld. (Lady) Gabrielle*, *Widow T. Daubreuille*, et cetera.⁴⁸ The term *F.L.C.*, Free Lady of Color, was used at times. Without doubt, people of color, men and women, free and slave, were treated better in New Orleans than in any other slave community.⁴⁹

Séjour, however, and many other men of his social level, suffered, and as a result found residence in Paris rather than in New Orleans.⁵⁰

He wrote poetry, drama and prose copiously.⁵¹ No account of

his death is found in New Orleans newspapers. The *Tribune*, owned by the Roudenez brothers, San Domingan mulattoes, suspended operation in 1867. But Paris newspapers took account of his death. Announcements of it occurred in *Le Soleil*, September 23, 1874; in *Le Figaro*, September 24-25, 1874; and in *Le Gaulois*, September 22, 1874.⁵²

Paul de Saint-Victor gives an analysis of *Les Mystères du Temple* in the *Renaissance Louisianaise* extolling it, September 24, 1862.⁵³

In his compelling personal magnetism over his audiences, in his rare gift of penetration, interpretation, richness of vocabulary and vocal expression he had few equals.

His last days were sad. In his taking leave of the stage there was tragedy,—tragedy such as he himself had so inimitably enacted “before all Paris” as it turned out to see and hear him play.⁵⁴

When he fell before the “fatal malady,”⁵⁵ his popularity had already begun to wane. Tastes were changing.⁵⁶ A less serious age was coming on that demanded something light. Yet Séjour, the “unfathered quadroon, born in a slave society that hindered the expression of his genius, had through sheer audacity and courage ventured beyond its pale in quest of freedom and fame and had achieved them,—achieved them at fearful cost and sacrifice.

His was the glory of the setting sun in mystic eclipse, a brilliant and melancholy star moving across the heavens and illuminating its own pathway, and sinking with mournful *éclat* into the darkness below. It is for gratitude and pride to reclaim him and award to him the crown of dramatic excellence that he so grandly sought and achieved.

A. E. PERKINS

Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle, p. 430.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.-Ante*, p. 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de Langue Française en Louisiane au XIX^e Siècle*, p. 429.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ R. L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, pp. 38-39. Note: Free translation n. 47: Victor Séjour, as others, was obliged to leave his native land in order to escape its prejudices.

⁴⁸ Carter G. Woodson, *Free Negro Heads of Families*, p. 31 ff.

⁴⁹ R. L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, p. 39.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Edward L. Tinker, *Les Écrits de*

American Negro Soldiery

(Continued from page 161)

War I the 317th Engineers was a unit of fighting technical troops in the 92nd Division which was detached for service with the British in Flanders. This arm of the service was the forerunner of a Negro unit at Fort Bragg, which is creating an enviable record and has supplied a number of detachments for other units elsewhere.

The 41st Engineers Regiment, Fort Bragg, North Carolina (under command of Lieutenant Colonel J. E. Wood) was activated in August, 1940, by cadres from the 24th Infantry, 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments, and is noted for a high esprit de corps. Their band, according to reliable sources, has special authorization for 65 pieces and may eclipse the fine records made by such bands as that of the Old Fifteenth New York, which, under the late James Reese Europe, was detached in the A. E. F. to give special performances for convalescent soldiers in and about Paris. Incidentally, Congressman Hamilton Fish, who according to recent radio dispatches was a battalion commander in that regiment of Negro national guardsmen, will shortly report to Fort Bragg as a colonel.

The Bandmaster of the 41st Engineers, Warrant Officer Brice, began his military musical career as a member of a small band of the 317th Sanitary Train, 92nd Division, under the direction of Lieutenant Edward Bates, M. R. C.

This assemblage is too well cognizant of ethnologic differences in the divisions of mankind. In the World War I, we who served on boards for the discharge of men from the draft received instructions that Negroes and Indians having naturally low arches were not to be automatically discharged on Surgeon's Certificate of disability for that condition except under extraordinary circumstances. You have probably noticed last week a press release reporting visual studies by a Yale University scientist

at Fort Bragg in which the conclusion was reached that a higher degree of visual acuity exists among Negro troops studied under conditions of darkness than among whites. It is too early to state into what policies these findings may be translated since night blindness has been such an interesting subject in connection with vitamin A deficiency.

DEHAVEN HINKSON,
Major, M. C. Reserve.

Hilda V. Grayson in the Field

(Continued from page 154)

culars, books from other sources bearing on Negro life, newspapers, magazines, and pictures.

AN EXAMPLE: One school in Alabama, while studying outstanding persons of the Negro race, decided to illustrate one of these persons with an exhibit. The project was called "Booker T. Washington—Educator." It consisted of maps of Virginia, West Virginia, and Alabama; a salt mine and a coal mine; a miniature log cabin, a shack, and brick buildings, made of red paper; a clay bust of Booker Washington and two posters telling his life's story.

The project lent itself readily to reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, geography, history, English, modeling, and drawing. The story was clear to any observer. Stories of local, state, national, and international nature may be likewise illustrated for the demonstration.

The Negro Teacher in National Defense

(Continued from page 162)

him a lesser American citizen but rather a greater one, for it gives him solid ground upon which to stand.

The Negro teacher must convince the black youth that even though America may not have the best political state in existence, it is the best we know of, and it does grant to a larger degree than totalitarian countries life, liberty, and the pur-

suit of happiness. All dictator nations today scoff at these terms, saying they are meaningless phrases and productive of no good; but to all good Americans, they are the answer to colonial settlement, the why for westward migration, the text of the Emancipation, and the very pillar of American Democracy.

A PREROGATIVE

So yours, Negro teacher, is not at all a problem or a task, but rather a privilege and a prerogative to set the Negro youth aright; to turn his face from the piteous whinings of injustice to the dawning horizon of a fuller and richer life. The Negro teacher can give her students courage, contact, and inspiration to fight for and defend this their native land, so that it may "never perish from the earth." By so doing, not only does the Negro help to preserve America itself, but he also fortifies his own position in making an actuality these famous words: "... A new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

RHOZA A. WALKER

A Recent Book

One of the most popular books of the year is *They Knew Lincoln*, by Dr. John E. Washington, of Washington, D. C., published by E. P. Dutton and Company in New York City. The author was born in Washington and lived near Ford's Theatre where Lincoln was assassinated. Dr. Washington personally knew servants who worked at the White House when Lincoln occupied it, and he became acquainted later with the contrabands, or refugees, once in the camps near the Capital where the Emancipator often availed himself of the opportunity to hear them sing spirituals. Out of such knowledge of Lincoln's relations with Negroes Dr. Washington has woven an interesting and charming story which the public has eagerly received. He has been lauded throughout the nation as the discoverer of a new phase of Lincoln's character.

April, the Season for Celebrating Freedom

DURING April some of the most advanced steps in the promotion of freedom were made. It was fortunate for the world that on the first day of April in 1786 Thomas Fowell Buxton, the British emancipationist, was born. He came to hate the curse of the slave trade and throughout his career used his influence to destroy it. What he achieved in this reform helped to destroy slavery throughout the world.

Thaddeus Stevens, the distinguished statesman of reconstruction time, was born on the fourth of April in 1792. As a youth he had to struggle to make his way and throughout life therefore he endeavored to remove from the path of human beings all obstacles to their progress. For this reason he fought slavery and advanced education at public expense. Pennsylvania owes its public school system mainly to Thaddeus Stevens. He would give freedom to every individual and the opportunity to prepare for the highest functions of citizenship.

For the same reason we should honor Judge John Belton O'Neal, of South Carolina who, at the time when those who would secure slavery were trying to keep the Negroes in ignorance, urged that Negroes should be taught at least enough of the fundamentals to read the Bible and cipher. He considered it an unpardonable sin to keep people in ignorance for selfish purposes and thus seal up their minds forever to the only revelation that man had of God. He saw at that time, moreover, that the South in keeping the slaves, their laboring element, in darkness could never compete in industry with the North which through its common schools and other facilities of education was developing the minds of its workers.

We remember the ninth of April as the day Lee surrendered and thus made the destruction of slavery assured. While one of the distinguished citizens of Virginia gave his influence against freedom, Thomas Jefferson, a still greater man from Virginia, bore eloquent testimony against the exploitation of one individual by another. Jefferson hoped that his country might soon abolish slavery

by peaceful means. When thoughts of this evil came to him he said, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." When he heard of persons rising and striking the blow for freedom he accounted for such efforts as inevitable because "the tree of liberty must be watered with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

We remember, too, that the battle of Fort Pillow took place on the twelfth day of April in 1864 when Negro soldiers, to the satisfaction of their friends, represented best by the abolition societies, the first one of which was established in this country on the fourteenth day of April in 1775, demonstrated that they could make the supreme sacrifice in the behalf of freedom. The struggle could not last much longer after 1864, and the course that things would take had already been indicated by the action of Congress, which on April 16, 1862, emancipated the Negroes in the District of Columbia.

We must not forget that into this world came James Madison Bell, a Negro poet, on April 3, 1826. With limited opportunities and against tremendous handicaps he acquired a fair education which enabled him to become acquainted with the world's best literature. To him came that inspiration of scores of other Negro bards who sang those canticles of love and woe and through verse appealed to an unwilling world for the freedom of an unoffending people.

For celebrating such events the Negro does not need to offer any apology. To forget those who thus took up an unpopular cause which involved the loss of social status and economic security in a conservative country would make us the victims of the sin of ingratitude. Some of these men, moreover, not only suffered the gibes and tortures of the press and the scorn and contempt of the exploiting aristocracy, but also died in the effort to advance the cause of freedom. "Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends." These heroes lived up to the great ideal enjoined upon us by the hymnist in urging "As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free."